

REMARKS

Upon entry of the amendment, claims 1, 3-5 and 8-17 will be all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the recitations of claim 7, and claims 6 and 7 have been canceled accordingly. Claim 10 has been placed in independent form by incorporating the recitations of claim 1 prior to the above amendment of claim 1. Claims 11-17 have been added based on the recitations of claims 3-9 but depending directly or indirectly on claim 10.

Since it is believed that the above amendment places the application in condition for allowance in view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, entry of the above amendment is respectfully requested.

Obviousness Rejection

On page 3 of the Office Action, in paragraph 5, claims 1, 3-6, 8, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tokutake et al in view of Honda.

In response to this rejection, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the recitations of claim 7, which has not been included in this rejection.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection has been overcome, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 5 of the Office Action, in paragraph 6, the Examiner has objected to claims 7 and 10 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but has indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 7 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In view of the Examiner's indication, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the recitations of claim 7, such that claim 1 would correspond to claim 7 in independent form. Also, Applicants have amended claim 10 so that it is in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1 and 10 and the claims dependent thereon should be allowable.

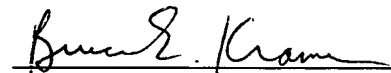
Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
USSN 09/922,723

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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